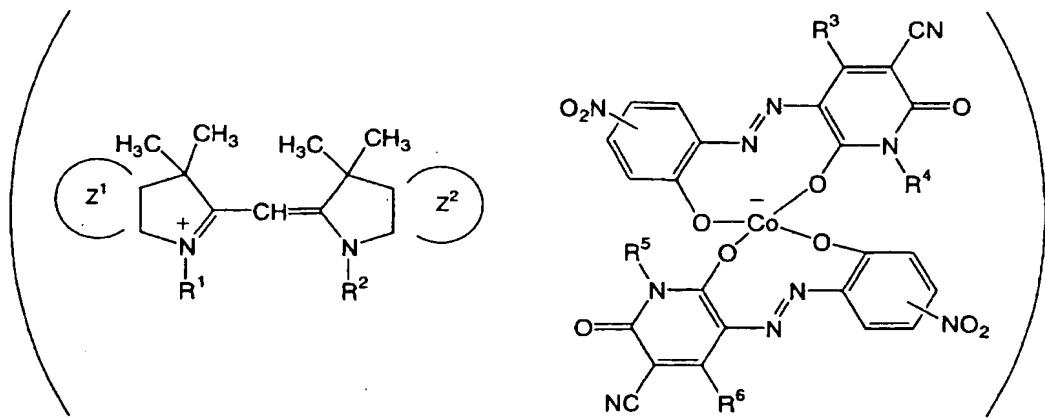


CLAIMS

1. A cyanine dye which is represented by General Formula  
1 and exhibits a major absorption maximum at a wavelength longer than  
5 400 nm in a solution.

General Formula 1:



(In General Formula 1,  $Z^1$  and  $Z^2$  mean monocyclic or condensed heterocyclic aromatic rings which are the same or different each other.  $R^1$  to  $R^6$  independently denote aliphatic hydrocarbon group and their aliphatic hydrocarbon groups may bear a substituent.)